



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
DEPUTY NAVAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR MARINE CORPS MATTERS  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380-1775

MCO 1700.23E

IGI

2 Jul 97

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1700.23E W/CH 1

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: REQUEST MAST

Ref: (a) U.S. Navy Regulations  
(b) Marine Corps Manual  
(c) MCO P1900.16E  
(d) JAGMAN  
(e) MCO P5354.1B  
(f) MCO 5040.6E

Encl: (1) Command Request Mast Program  
(2) Request Mast with the Inspector General of the Marine Corps  
(3) Marine Corps Request Mast Application ([NAVMC 11296](#))

1. Purpose. This Order promulgates Request Mast policy.
2. Cancellation. MCO 1700.23D.
3. Summary of Revision. This Order contains significant revisions which clarify and streamline Request Mast policy and procedure and should be reviewed in its entirety.
4. Background. The right of all Marines to directly communicate grievances to, or seek assistance from, their Commanding officers is established in U.S. Navy Regulations (Arts. 0820c and 1151.1) and the Marine Corps Manual (par 2805) and is exercised through the formal process of Request Mast. Request Mast includes both the Right of the Marine to communicate with the commander, normally in person, and the requirement that the commander consider the matter and personally respond to the Marine requesting mast. Request Mast provides a Marine the opportunity to communicate not only with his or her immediate commanding officer, but also with any superior commander in the chain of command up to and including the Marine's immediate commanding general. Request Mast also provides commanders with firsthand knowledge of the morale and general welfare of the command. To be effective, Request Mast must have the wholehearted support of those to whom the leadership of Marines is entrusted. Anyone who attempts to deprive a Marine of the right to Request Mast, through either acts of omission or commission, will be subject to punishment under the UCMJ. Request Mast does not preclude the informal process of communications which occurs between seniors and subordinates.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

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5. Information. For the purpose of Request Mast:

a. "Marine" includes all Active and Reserve Marines who are assigned to Marine Corps commands, including those attached or serving on temporary additional duty. Uniformed members of other services assigned or attached to Marine Corps commands may also exercise the rights of Request Mast.

b. "Commander" includes the Marine's immediate commanding officer (officer with NJP authority) and every commanding officer in the chain of command up to and including the immediate commanding general. It also includes inspector-instructors and officers-in-charge (provided the OIC is vested with NJP authority).

c. "Commanding General" includes a commanding officer exercising general court-martial convening authority. It also includes an officer serving in an acting capacity. The immediate commanding general is normally the officer exercising general court-martial authority (GCMA) over the Marine. Where the GCMA is not a Marine officer, the separation authority for administrative discharges will be the immediate commanding general for Request Mast purposes.

d. "Communicate" includes the opportunity to appear personally before a commanding officer or the right to either correspond with that officer in writing or speak with the officer by telephone, as provided for in this Order.

6. Policy

a. Request Mast is the principal means for a Marine to formally communicate a grievance to, or seek assistance from, his or her commander. The process does not include those outside the official chain of command, such as subordinate officers or SNCOs/NCOs.

b. Request Mast is not intended to be used for the purpose of harassment, avoiding duty, or intentionally interfering with the commander's ability to carry out the functions and mission of the command.

c. A commander may deny a Request Mast application if there is another specific avenue of redress available to the Marine. Commanders should carefully evaluate each Request Mast to determine if other peripheral issues should be addressed; accordingly, commanders may wish to hear the Marine's presentation of matters before making a decision to deny. The commanding officer shall explain to the Marine why the Request Mast application was denied and, if appropriate, what procedure must be followed to resolve the issue. The authority to deny a Request Mast includes authority to refuse to further process the Request Mast. Whenever a commander denies a Request Mast under this authority, he or she shall, within a reasonable time, forward a report of such action and the basis therefore to the immediate commanding

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general via the chain of command. In cases in which the officer denying a Request Mast is the immediate commanding general, no such report need be made. The following are some examples to which other avenues of redress apply:

(1) The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) provides for the protection of the rights of a Marine at every stage of disciplinary action from investigation through final review or appeal. Therefore, a commander whether contemplated, pending, in progress, or final. Request Mast is not intended to be used as a means of collateral attack against the proceedings, punishment, or findings and sentence resulting from disciplinary action brought under the UCMJ.

(2) Reference (c), chapters 4 and 6, contains provisions for the protection of rights of Marines being processed for involuntary administrative separation. Accordingly, commanders may deny a Request Mast that has as its subject such involuntary administrative discharge proceedings whether contemplated, pending, in progress, or final.

(3) Chapter III of reference (d) contains guidance for the preparation, submission, and processing of complaints under Article 138, UCMJ, and Article 1150 of reference (a). Commanders may deny a Request Mast if its subject is an ongoing Article 138 or 1150 investigation. The local staff judge advocate should be consulted in such instances.

d. Request Mast is the preferred method for submitting Equal Opportunity formal complaints of discrimination, to include Sexual Harassment. Request Mast may also be used to address other complaints such as hazing.

e. A Marine does not have to disclose the subject of the Request Mast to anyone in the chain of command except to the commander with whom the Marine is Requesting Mast.

f. When a Marine submits a Request Mast to a commander in the chain of command, who is not at the same base or immediate geographic location, the Request Mast will be expeditiously forwarded by the senior commander in the immediate area. The Request Mast will then be addressed with the Marine in person, by telephone or in writing, as deemed appropriate.

g. When the operational commitments of a Marine's command, whether for training or actual employment, would be unreasonably interfered with by adherence to the procedures set forth in this Order, the right of the Marine to apply for a Request Mast to a commander above the level of the immediate commanding officer may be suspended by the commanding general for the duration of the commitment. The authority to suspend will be invoked sparingly and then only to the extent required to ensure the accomplishment of the command's mission. The suspension may and should be lifted in whole or in part at any

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deployments away from the base or station where the command's garrison headquarters is located. Any such suspension and the reasons therefore shall be made known to all Marines whose rights may be affected.

h. Although a Marine may be granted the privilege of forwarding an application for Request Mast with higher commanders, such as the Commandant of the Marine Corps or the Secretary of the Navy, there is no vested right to Request Mast with such higher commander.

(1) Any commanding general in the chain of command between the Marine's immediate Commanding General and the Commandant of the Marine Corps may establish such policies and procedures as they desire for processing Request Masts addressed to them, including that such requests may be returned without action.

(2) Applications for Request Mast with the Commandant of the Marine Corps or with the Secretary of the Navy via the Commandant of the Marine Corps will only be considered if specifically recommended by the Commanding General endorsing the application. Absent such specific recommendation, that commander shall not forward the application. Any application received at Headquarters, United States Marine Corps that does not include a recommendation for consideration and any not forwarded via the chain of command will be returned without action. Such applications for Request Mast must be in writing and those addressed to the Commandant of the Marine Corps will be answered in writing. Those addressed to the Secretary of the Navy via the Commandant of the Marine Corps will be forwarded with a recommended response.

(3) Request Mast applications to the Commandant of the Marine Corps will be handled by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC).

i. Nothing in this Order is intended to expand or abridge the rights of Marines otherwise guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Federal law or applicable Department of Defense, Navy, or other Marine Corps regulations. The exercise of such rights is not governed by the procedures contained in this Order.

j. Commanding generals may coordinate with on another to provide for the availability of another commanding general to conduct Request Mast whenever the circumstances require an exception to the provisions of this enclosure. Additionally, the authority to conduct Request Mast may be delegated to a deputy or assistant commander who is a general officer, when appropriate.

k. Enclosure (1) contains instructions for establishing a command Request Mast program and procedures for processing Request Mast applications. Only those procedural exceptions provided for in this Order are authorized. Any individual, including the Marine Requesting Mast, who impedes adherence to these procedures may be subject to disciplinary action.

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1. Any interference with a Marine's right to Request Mast or any attempt of reprisal against a Marine who has Requested Mast is prohibited. No Marine may suppress, or attempt to suppress another Marine from initiating, writing, attempted violation, or solicitation of another to violate this order by interfering with a Marine's right to Request Mast, subjects involved members to disciplinary action under Article 92 of the UCMJ. This Order is a lawful general order and is effective immediately without further implementation.

7. Action

a. CG, MCCDC. Develop or revise, as appropriate, any instructional courses and materials which pertain to the Request Mast program.

b. Commanders shall:

(1) Establish a command Request Mast program and publish a Request Mast directive conforming with this Order. NAVMC 11296 will be identified as the Request Mast Application. Local reproduction of this form is authorized. NAVMC 11296 is also available in the Marine Corps Electronic Forms System (MCEFS) utilizing "Form Flow" software.

(2) Ensure that all personnel are familiar with Request Mast policy and procedures.

(3) Attempt to process and resolve a Marine's Request Mast issue without delay. In general, there should be no more than 1 working day delay from when the request is made to when the Marine sees his/her commander. This should apply at each level of command.

(4) Provide Marines with an opportunity to Request Mast in person unless extraordinary circumstances would preclude such an appearance.

(5) Establish and monitor follow-up procedures to ensure that each Request Mast issue is resolved in a timely manner and no action, adverse or prejudicial to the interests of any Marine, results from the Marine's exercise of the right to Request Mast.

(a) In matters which cannot or should not be resolved, explain to the Marine why action will not be taken to resolve the grievance and/or advise the Marine as to the proper avenue to address the grievance if there is one.

(b) In matters which are beyond the commander's authority to resolve, forward the Request Mast to the next higher commander for consideration and appropriate action.

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(6) Ensure that the records, proceedings, and final dispositions of Request Mast are properly safeguarded to prevent such information from having a prejudicial effect on the Marine. Request Mast records shall be maintained separately from service records.

(7) Ensure compliance with applicable provisions of this Order.

(8) Exercise those disciplinary or administrative options considered appropriate if a Marine commits or attempts to commit interference or reprisal against any Marine exercising his or her right to Request Mast as indicated in paragraph 6.1. above.

c. The Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC) shall:

(1) Identify, when necessary, commanding generals to conduct Request Mast.

(2) On behalf of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, conduct Request Mast while on inspection trips, as provided for in reference (f), or at other times. Review the Request Mast programs of commands as part of the inspection process.

(3) Process Request Mast applications addressed to the Commandant of the Marine Corps or to the Secretary of the Navy via the Commandant of the Marine Corps that have been forwarded by the appropriate Commanding General for consideration.

8. Records Disposition. Pursuant to SECNAVINST 5212.5C, Request Mast records are to be retained for 2 years from the date final action is taken.

G. P. ...  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

DISTRIBUTION: PCN 10202320200

COPY TO: 7000110 (55)  
7000060 (3)  
7000099/8145005 (2)  
700093, 144/8145001 (1)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
DEPUTY NAVAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR MARINE CORPS MATTERS  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380-1775

MCO 1700.23E Ch 1

IGI

8 Apr 99

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1700.23E Ch 1

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps

To: Distribution List

Subj: REQUEST MAST

1. Purpose. To direct pen changes to the basic Order
2. Action. On Enclosure (1) pages 2 and 3, change the SSIC to read: MCO 1700.23E Ch 1.
3. Filing Instructions. File this Change transmittal immediately behind the signature page of the basic Order.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C.C. Krulak", is centered on the page.

C. C. KRULAK

Commandant of the Marine Corps

DISTRIBUTION: PCN 10202320201

Copy to: 7000110 (55)  
7000060 (3)  
7000099/8145005 (2)  
7000093,144/8145001 (1)

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## COMMAND REQUEST MAST PROGRAM

1. All commanders down to the lowest administrative level will establish a command Request Mast program conforming with this Order. A directive conforming with this Order will be published and all personnel must be informed of the directive's contents. As a guide in determining the lowest administrative level, the following example is provided: A company whose administrative functions are performed by battalion administration is not required to publish a directive containing all the required criteria that would normally be contained in a company directive, provided that the next higher headquarters directive adequately addresses Request Mast procedures for its subordinate units. Companies that perform basic administrative tasks, such as unit diary and service record maintenance, are required to publish a command Request Mast program directive.

2. In addition to applicable information contained in paragraphs 4 through 8 of this Order, a command Request Mast directive must contain the following:

a. A statement of the purpose of the command Request Mast program.

b. A step by step outline, in understandable terms, of the procedures to be followed by a Marine who desires to request mast. This outline will include, at a minimum, the following information and instructions:

(1) A statement that the Request Mast must be submitted in writing, using [NAVMC 11296](#), via the chain of command to the commander with whom Request Mast is desired.

(2) Instructions on how to prepare Request Mast applications.

(3) Identification by billet of the individual whom a Marine should contact first for assistance in preparation of the Request Mast application. Typically, for enlisted Marines, this is the unit Sergeant Major, Senior Enlisted Marine, or Administrative Chief and for Officers, the Executive Officer or Adjutant. Also, identification by billet of each commander in the chain of command with whom a Marine may Request Mast.

c. A statement that Marines applying for Request Mast in good faith may do so without fear of reprisal or prejudice to their interests.

d. A statement that Request Mast is not intended to be used for the purpose of harassment, avoiding duty, or intentionally interfering with the commander's ability to carry out the functions and mission of the command.

e. A statement that the Marine's Request Mast issue may not be resolved to his or her satisfaction, but that the Marine will be afforded the opportunity to address the issue with the commanding officer.

ENCLOSURE (1)



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f. A statement that once the Marine has indicated his or her desire to Request Mast with the commander, NCOs, SNCOs and Officers subordinate to the Commanding Officer will make no effort to delay the Request Mast process in order to solve the problem themselves but rather will focus their effort on making the Marine available to the commander.

3. Additionally, the command Request Mast program directive will contain the following guidance and instructions for the processing of Request Mast applications:

a. A requirement that each intermediate commander shall attempt to resolve the Marine's Request Mast issue, if revealed, without delay. If the issue has not been addressed to the Marine's satisfaction, the intermediate commander shall forward the application via the chain of command without delay to the commander to whom it is addressed. In general, there should be no more than 1 working day delay at any level of command. Explanations for delay must be provided to the Marine and forwarded via chain of command.

b. A requirement that Request Mast will be conducted at the earliest reasonable time. In general, there should be no more than 1 working day delay at any level of command. Commanders will hear emergency cases as soon as initially submitted. For purposes of example, to determine whether a Request Mast is an emergency case, among other things, consider (1) whether the Marine is subject to an ongoing hardship (e.g., delay in receiving pay); (2) the severity of hardship, if any; and (3) if the issue will remain unresolved upon a certain date, time, or expected event in the immediate future (e.g., request for leave to attend a relative's funeral being denied).

c. A requirement that commanders shall make every effort to provide the Marine with an opportunity to Request Mast in person. If personal appearance is not practical, the commander shall respond in writing to the Request Mast. The commander will also provide an explanation of why a personal appearance was not practical.

d. A requirement that the commander with whom a Marine has Requested Mast will forward to the next higher commander those Requests Mast deemed to be legitimate grievances or requests for assistance which are beyond the commander's authority to resolve.

e. A statement that the following instructions apply if a Marine Requests Mast with the immediate commanding general:

(1) The Marine will prepare a complete written statement covering the reasons for Requesting Mast. Supporting documents should be attached to the statement. The statement may also include a list of witnesses with a summary of the expected testimony of each witness. The statement must include a summary of responsive action taken by each commander in the chain of command with whom the Marine has communicated his or her problem.

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(2) Each intermediate commander to whom the Marine reveals the Request Mast subject, will provide a written statement as to his or her understanding of the Request Mast subject and his or her responsive action. Each statement will be added to the Request Mast prior to the Marine communicating the Request Mast subject to the next commander.

(3) If the Marine has not revealed the subject of the Request Mast to the other commanders in the chain of command, the Marine must include an explanatory statement. The Marine may place the Request Mast in an envelope marked "To be opened by the Commanding General only."

(4) When establishing internal Request Mast procedures, commanding generals may authorize a Request Mast to be reviewed by the local command inspector. In these situations the following considerations apply:

(a) A command inspector may not respond to nor deny a Request Mast on behalf of the Commanding General, but may make appropriate recommendations pertaining to the Request Mast to the Commanding General.

(b) Any lawful communication made to a command inspector will also constitute a protected disclosure under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act. Therefore, in addition to the protection afforded to a Marine for exercising his or her right to Request Mast under U.S. Navy Regulations and this Order, further protection is afforded to the Marine under 10 U.S.C. Section 1034, Military Whistleblower Protection Act as implemented by SECNAVINST 5370.7, Military Whistleblower Protection.

f. A requirement that a Marine will make a written statement on the Request Mast or attached sheet indicating that he or she has had the opportunity to communicate directly with the commanding officer and has been informed of any actions to be taken by the commander conducting the Request Mast.

g. A requirement that if a Request Mast addressed to a higher commander is resolved at a lower level, the Marine will make a written statement on the Request Mast or attached sheet indicating that he or she is satisfied with the action taken at the lower level and has chosen to voluntarily withdraw the Request Mast. This statement will be jointly signed by the Marine and a witness.

4. Marines confined in correctional facilities have the right to Request Mast. A Request Mast marked "To be opened by the Commanding Officer/Commanding General only" will not be opened by correctional facilities personnel.

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## REQUEST MAST WITH THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MARINE CORPS

1. The Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC) or designated representatives of the IGMC shall conduct Request Mast while on inspection visits or at other times as agents of the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

2. In every case, the IGMC or designated representative will make efforts to determine whether or not Marines being heard have attempted to exercise the right of Request Mast within the command. If not, the reasons should be explored.

3. The following information/instructions should be used by commands in preparation for an inspection or at any time Request Mast is conducted by the IGMC:

a. Request Mast will be conducted for all Marines desiring to do so. All personnel who desire to Request Mast with the IGMC representative must be afforded this opportunity subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph 6 of this Order.

b. Efforts to solve problems should be made at the lowest level; however, during field visits by the IGMC, no special attempt should be made to solve a problem to the Marine's satisfaction solely for the purpose of avoiding Request Mast with the IGMC representative. No Marine will be required to explain the subject of their Request Mast prior to seeing the IGMC representative.

c. It is understood that some Marines will bring up the same problem in different forums hoping for a favorable decision. The majority of such cases heard by the IGMC representatives are returned to the commander for a solution, with IGMC being informed of the final disposition of the case.

d. Part I of the Request Mast Application ([NAVMC 11296](#)) in Appendix A will be prepared by the Marine who desires a Request Mast, who will then personally deliver the application to the IGMC representative. The command will deliver the service record and medical record, as appropriate, to the IGMC representative at the time of the Marine's Request Mast. A Request Mast that has as its subject disciplinary action under the UCMJ or involuntary administrative separation, whether contemplated, pending, in progress, or final, may not be considered by the IGMC representative.

e. The local command will provide the IGMC representative a private area with a class "A" telephone and sufficient space to accommodate those Marines awaiting their turn to Request Mast.

ENCLOSURE (2)

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f. When the time and place for Request Mast with the IGMC representative has been determined, a command bulletin will be published containing the following information:

(1) The subject will be "REQUEST MAST WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF/OR THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MARINE CORPS (IGMC)."

(2) Every Marine will be afforded the opportunity to appear before an IGMC representative to Request Mast.

(3) Date, time and location of the Request Mast.

(4) Procedures to be followed.

(5) Marines who, in good faith, wish to appear before the IGMC representative at Request Mast may do so without fear of reprisal or prejudice to their interests.

g. The IGMC will evaluate the local command Request Mast program during the IGMC inspection to determine if the command's Marines (1) understand Request Mast policy and procedures; and (2) understand that Request Mast is a readily available, impartial, and effective way to seek assistance with problems without fear of reprisal or prejudice.

4. Following the Request Mast, the Marine concerned should clearly understand the disposition or probable disposition of the Request Mast subject, whether resolved of site by the IGMC, referred to the local commander, or referred to Headquarters Marine Corps.

5. The original of the IGMC Request Mast Application (Appendix A) will be retained by the office of the IGMC. A copy will be retained by the command and one will be provided to the Marine. The application should be annotated to show what final action was taken. Replies to Request Mast applications are handled by the IGMC representative. The Marine will indicate on the Request Mast Application the degree of satisfaction with the action taken at the Request Mast. Local reproduction of this form is authorized.

**MARINE CORPS REQUEST MAST APPLICATION**

JAVMC 11296 (Rev. 6-97)

IN: 0000-00-888-0350 U/I: EA

**PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT**

Authority: Title 5, U. S. Code 301; Title 10, USC Section 5013

Principal Purpose: Formal filing of complaints/problems to command personnel.

Routine Uses: To provide a record to facilitate personnel management actions and decisions; to serve as a data source for complaint/problem information and resolution efforts.

Disclosure: Disclosure is voluntary. Failure to complete the requested items could result in delayed command action and/or an inaccurate/incomplete analysis of the complaint/problem.

**PART I: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT**

1. NAME:	2. RANK:	3. SSN:
4. UNIT:	5. RACE/ETHNIC GROUP:	
6. GENDER:	7. DATE:	

a. I desire to Request Mast with: (Provide the name and billet of the Commanding Officer with whom you desire to communicate.):

b. NATURE OF COMPLAINT/PROBLEM: (Give in as much detail as possible the basis of your complaint; describe the incident(s)/behavior(s) and date(s) of the occurrence(s); the names of the individuals involved, witnesses and to whom it may have been previously reported. Include any other information relevant to your complaint/problem. Attach additional sheets, as needed).

c. REQUESTED REMEDY/OUTCOME: (Clearly state what assistance or complaint resolution you are seeking from the commanding officer named in 8a above.)

**AFFIDAVIT**

\_\_\_\_\_, have read this statement which begins in Block 8b on this page (page 1) and ends on page \_\_\_\_\_. I fully understand the statement made by me and certify the statement is true. I have initialed all corrections. I make this formal statement without threat of punishment and without coercion, unlawful influence, or unlawful inducement.

(SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT/DATE)

NAVMC 11296 (Rev 6-97) PAGE 2

## PART II: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE OFFICER CONDUCTING REQUEST MAST

10. DISPOSITION: (Provide a detailed explanation of actions taken or attempted to resolve the complaint/problem, to include any other referrals. If an inquiry/investigation was initiated as a result of this complaint, provide the type conducted and the results. Attach additional sheets as necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMMANDING OFFICER SIGNATURE/DATE

## PART III: APPLICANT'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REQUEST MAST

(Applicant should initial/complete the appropriate statement(s))

\_\_\_\_\_ I have had the opportunity to communicate directly with my Commanding Officer named in Block 8a and understand the disposition or probable disposition of my problem/complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have had the opportunity to communicate directly with \_\_\_\_\_  
(name and billet of commanding officer subordinate to officer named in Block 8a), understand the disposition or probable disposition of my problem/complaint, and voluntarily withdraw this Request Mast.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have not had the opportunity to communicate directly with my Commanding Officer named in Block 8a.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have had the opportunity to communicate directly with my Commanding Officer named in Block 8a but have not been informed of the disposition or probable disposition of my problem/complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS' SIGNATURE/DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE/DATE